

Hodge (H. L.)

AN

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

TO THE

COURSE ON OBSTETRICS,

AND

DISEASES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN,

DELIVERED IN

THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA,

NOVEMBER 6, 1839.

BY HUGH L. HODGE, M.D.

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CORRESPONDENCE.

Philadelphia, November 25th, 1839.

DEAR SIR.—The Medical Class of the University of Pennsylvania, through us their Committee appointed at a meeting held on Monday, the 25th instant, on motion of Mr. Edmondson of Virginia, Mr. Gunn of North Carolina being in the chair, request a copy of your very appropriate Introductory Address of the 6th instant, for publication.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

W. J. EDMONDSON,
J. B. HEADEN,
WM. B. WORNACK,
WM. H. MÜLLER,
S. T. SMITH.

PROFESSOR HODGE.

Philadelphia, November 27th, 1839.

GENTLEMEN.—While complying with the wishes of the Medical Class, so politely communicated through you, their Committee, I regret, that the limits of a formal Lecture, and the pressure of professional engagements, forbid a more extensive investigation and a more full illustration of a subject, important in every aspect, whether we consider the value of human life, the moral questions involved, or the ignorance or indifference of society on a point involving some of its most valued and endearing interests.

With much respect, your's,

HUGH L. HODGE.

Messrs. W. J. EDMONDSON, J. B. HEADEN, }
WM. B. WORNACK, WM. H. MÜLLER, } Committee.
T. S. SMITH, }

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

GENTLEMEN OF THE MEDICAL CLASS:

THE revolution of another year furnishes the Professors of this University the pleasure of witnessing these halls crowded with intelligent and cultivated youth, from all portions of our extended country.

We bid you welcome. We hail you as the devoted and enthusiastic cultivators of a science, which, however difficult and complicated, deservedly ranks among the most exalted pursuits to which the human mind can be devoted.

The science of medicine, in every aspect, is important and elevated: whether we regard its objects, the health and lives of human beings; its cultivators, many of them individuals of the first talents and the most exemplary morals; the difficulties of attainment, demanding attention, diligence, perseverance, self-denial, and the continued exertion of mind and body for a series of years; the amount of literary and scientific knowledge which it imperiously demands for its proper cultivation, calling, as it does, to its aid all sciences and all knowledge; receiving assistance from the Geologist, who surveys the earth and penetrates its deepest recesses; from the Astronomer, who walks among the stars and suns of other systems; from the Chemist, who deals with atoms; and from the Metaphysician, who attempts to grasp the subtleties of mind, and elucidate the operations of our spiritual existence.

The superiority of our profession is illustrated, not only by the talents and excellencies of its cultivators, and by the variety and extent of the knowledge required, but, and here it dreads

no comparison, by the practical benefits which it is constantly conferring on the community.

It is not my present object to pourtray these benefits. If time and opportunity allowed, minute and interesting illustrations might easily be given of the beneficial influences of medicine. You might be conducted to the secret chamber of suffering—to the public hospitals overflowing with human misery—or to the battle-field, that aceldama, that field of blood, where the ingenuity of man has been successfully exercised in the mutilation and destruction of his species: and in all, and each of these, you might witness the alleviation or relief of pain—the arrest of disease and death—the returning health, and strength, and beauty, which attend the scientific and experienced physician, and which proclaim, in accents of joy and with looks expressive of the deepest gratitude and affection, the benevolent and beneficent influences of the healing art. And even when success is denied—when disease and death prove conquerors, and, amidst manifold trials and suffering, man passes away from this world to the next—how divinely does the medical practitioner administer comfort to mind and body! how greatly does he alleviate suffering! how gently does he support his confiding patient to the borders of that grave from which he would have gladly delivered him!

There is, however, another aspect in which our profession is to be viewed, which has not been sufficiently regarded, and which enlarges, even to an indefinite degree, the number of those blessings of which it is so prolific. Allusion is made to its capability of preserving health, of preventing disease and death, in other words to *hygiene*. As a disciple of *hygiea*, the physician becomes the guardian of the health and lives of the community. He takes cognizance of the various direct and indirect causes by which disease may be introduced into private dwellings, hospitals, jails, ships, armies, cities, and countries; he points out the *jувantia* as well as the *lædentia*—what will benefit, as well as what will injure. He discourses scientifically, as well as ethically, on the advantages of temperance in meats and drinks; on the influence of a pure atmosphere; on the im-

portance of exercise, whether passive or active, in the city or the country; of cleanliness; of bathing; clothing; temperature.

He investigates and points out the influence of the mind on the body; the necessity of regulating the exercises of the intellectual powers; of restraining and guiding the warm affections of the heart; of checking the still warmer and more threatening ebullitions of passion. In short, every thing which can by possibility injure human health or life, becomes the subject of his reflections, and enables him to proffer advice beneficial to society.

Who can estimate the extent or variety of the blessings thus conferred through the instrumentality of our exalted profession? Were the rules of hygiea universally followed; were intemperance in eating and drinking banished; were suitable attentions paid to cleanliness, to clothing, to the purity of the air, to exercise, to the indulgence of the animal passions, or to the proper employment of the intellectual faculties, or of the moral affections, how changed, how renovated would be the state of man; what a vast amount of suffering would be prevented; how many sources of disease would be dried up; how many dire, bloody, and fatal conflicts, now brought on by the excited passions of men, and productive of such a vast amount of misery, would be avoided! How would society thrive, and the comforts and happiness of life be enlarged, under the benign influences of temperance and frugality—of that “*moderation in all things*”—which is the grand principle of hygiea, the secret of health, the procurator of long, and vigorous, and prosperous life!

Such general considerations might be enlarged upon and suitably illustrated; but let us for the present apply them to that department of medical science which I have the honour to represent in this University.

The science of Obstetrics has more immediate reference to the process of parturition in all its varieties, whether natural or unnatural—simple or complicated. This function (for it is truly physiological, having reference to healthy, not diseased actions,) is by far the most complicated and dangerous of the

female economy. It has reference, also, not merely to the act of delivery, but to the whole period of gestation, and to the condition of the female for some time after parturition. Of course, it must take cognizance of the temperaments and constitutions of females; of their peculiarities; of their fitness, or even of their capability to bear children; and how far this capability is injured or destroyed by prior disease or accident.

Obstetrics, moreover, is distinguished by the interesting fact that the welfare of two individuals is involved in every case of pregnancy and parturition. Hence the practitioner of Obstetrics has his duties and responsibilities necessarily enlarged. He must regard the infant as well as the mother, from the period of conception to delivery; and generally, is called upon to be its medical attendant during the first few weeks or months of its independent existence.

Hence, the diseases of females and infants are usually committed more exclusively to his care; and, in accordance with the views just presented of the duties of the medical practitioner, he must call on all the faculties of his mind—all the resources of his knowledge and experience—to prevent as well as cure their diseases; yea, at all times and on all occasions, to watch over their physical interests, that life and health may be preserved, and every corporeal faculty be perfectly developed. He appears as the *physical guardian* of females and their offspring.

Under this representation of the subject, the elevated character and the immense importance of obstetric science, to the welfare of a community, must at once be apparent. On former occasions I have urged this subject on the attention of my pupils; alluding to the past and present unaccountable neglect of this branch of medical science, and insisting on its inherent superiority and its practical bearings. I endeavoured to exhibit these truths, by pointing out the physical and intellectual character of the female sex—noticing the peculiarity of her anatomical and physiological developments—dwelling on the influence which she exerts over her progeny, at conception, during its embryotic and fœtal existence, and especially during

the susceptible periods of infancy and childhood, when man, by the admirable arrangements of Providence, is committed almost exclusively to the superintendence of woman. Add to this, the influence, almost unbounded, which in future life she exerts over man, her nominal lord, by her beauty and grace—her sprightliness and wit—and especially by the depth and devotedness of her affections.

It was maintained, that woman requires assistance in childbirth, as accidents may at any moment occur, involving the life of mother or child, or of both; that this truth was not nullified by the fact, that females often deliver themselves safely, and that the inferior order of animals have usually favourable labours. It was shown that there are important anatomical, physiological, and moral reasons why parturition, in the human female, should be more difficult and dangerous than among animals of an inferior grade; and it was also, I may say, demonstrated that dangerous and often fatal complications of labour, arise from anatomical peculiarities of mother or child—from irregular or perverted states or disturbances of her physiological functions, and especially from the existence of local or general disease. Hence the absolute necessity of the science and practice of Obstetrics, to detect these dangers, and to protect and preserve a being so wonderfully constructed—so beautiful, so interesting, so moral, so intellectual, and so influential, for good, over the best interests of man and over the destinies of nations, as *woman*, “the last, best gift of Heaven to man.”

But, however important and valuable, however good and excellent, a mother must be regarded, we should not forget her offspring, in the various stages of its existence, from the moment of its conception to delivery, and from birth to the full development of its physical and moral nature.

In a most mysterious manner brought into existence, how wonderful its formation! Imperfect in the first instance, yea, even invisible to the naked eye, the embryo is nevertheless endowed at once with the principles of vitality; and, although retained within the system of its mother, it has, in a strict sense,

an independent existence. It immediately manifests all the phenomena of organic life; it forms its own fluids and circulates them; it is nourished and developed, and, very rapidly, from being a “rudes indigestâque moles,” apparently an inorganic drop of fluid, its organs are generated and its form perfected. It daily gains strength and grows; and, while still within the organ of its mother, manifests some of the phenomena of animal life, especially as regards motility. After the fourth month, its motions are perceptible to the mother, and in a short period can be perceived by other individuals on due investigation. From certain facts it is also inferred, that the fœtus has perception in utero—the sense of tact—and, moreover, that at all times it has its organs, relating to animal life, in such a state that they will act when they meet with their appropriate stimuli. Hence children born during either of the last three months of utero-gestation, very generally survive; their brain, nerves, and senses being sufficiently developed to receive, without injury, appropriate impressions from natural stimuli. It is a living being. Moreover, facts, in great number, can readily be produced, which positively prove that there is no direct communication between the fœtus, even in its earliest embryotic and most imperfect state, and the mother whose organs contain it. Surrounded by fluids and membranes, it derives from its mother the materials for support and growth, and a *nidus*, or spot where it shall be protected from physical injury. Similar to the chick in ovo, it is therefore not only a living but an independent being. And, as it will be universally acknowledged that the father has no influence over his offspring after the moment of conception, the same is true as regards the mother. All the peculiarities which a mother impresses on her offspring (and they are numerous and wonderful,) are imparted at or before the moment of conception. Afterwards the embryo is an independent existence. As regards its vital properties, it is as perfect as it ever will be—its subsequent nutrition, growth, susceptibilities, are but the successive manifestations of these vital properties. As the acorn, removed from the towering and majestic oak, and dropped

into the earth, is capable of vegetating and producing, in due time, under favourable circumstances, by its own inherent powers, another oak, similar in size and grandeur to that from which the acorn fell; so the embryo, by its own innate, vital properties, received at the moment of conception, is gradually developed in utero, from its incipient state of existence (*punctum saliens*,) to that of the perfect *fœtus*, at the full period of utero-gestation. Physiologically, therefore, the infant after birth, while deriving all its nourishment and means of support from the breasts of its mother, cannot be regarded as more independent than the *fœtus* in utero. The child, unborn, absorbs nourishment from its parent through the medium of the uterus: after birth it imbibes the materials for nutrition by means of the *mammæ*, or breasts. There is essentially no difference in its physiological properties, or as to the independent character of its existence, whether it remains in the uterus or is supported by the mother out of the uterus.

The observations now made are applicable to all animated beings, to plants and animals, to the lower and higher orders of vital existences; but we must bear in mind the trite adage—that “like produces like”—that the offspring resembles the parent in all essential points. Hence, the human embryo is to be regarded, not merely as representing the animal existence of its parents, but as possessing an intellectual and moral nature. Wonderful as is the formation of the body of the *fœtus*, with all its susceptibilities; with its organic and animal life; still more mysterious is the transmission of a moral or spiritual nature from parent to child. The child imbibes, in some way altogether inexplicable, a spiritual existence from its parents. Its intellectual and moral character are modified by influences derived from both parents. *How* or *when* these are exerted, are most interesting questions.

Here the imagination of man has been very busy. Vain speculations have existed as to the moral nature; yea, even as to the great question of the moral accountability of unborn children. The medical philosopher, or rather metaphysician, (for the boundaries of true philosophy have been transgressed,)

and also the professed theologian, have given reins to their imagination, and speculated freely as to the question, when does the union occur between the soul and the body—between our corporeal and spiritual natures? This has been regarded, also, as involving the question of the perfect vitality of the fœtus; as prior to this union, it (the fœtus) was considered by many, “*inanimate*,” or at best, but a portion of the mother, “*pars matris viscerum*.” After the junction, it was regarded as a perfect human being; possessing a *moral* as well as a *physical* character. On this subject, there are and have been many extravagancies. Hippocrates supposed animation occurred from thirty to forty-two days after conception. The stoics, on the contrary, maintained that there was no proper or perfect vitality until after birth and the establishment of respiration. The academicians maintained, that life was imparted during gestation, and hence even the Church of Rome speaks of animate and inanimate fœtuses. According to some, this animation occurred in three days; others, in seven days; others, at the fortieth or sixtieth day, when the pullulation or organization of the fœtus was completed. The usual impression, and one which is probably still maintained by the mass of the community, is, that the embryo is perfected at the period of quickening, say, the one hundred and twelfth or one hundred and twentieth day. When the mother first perceives motion is considered the period when the fœtus becomes *animated*; when it receives its spiritual nature into union with its corporeal.

These and similar suppositions are, as has been already shown, contrary to all fact, to analogy, to reason, and, if it were not for the high authorities, medical, legal, and theological, in opposition, we might add, to common sense. What, it may be asked, have the sensations of the mother to do with the vitality of the child? Is it not alive because the mother does not feel it? Every practitioner of Obstetrics can bear witness, that children live and thrive when the mother has no consciousness of its motions. Moreover, how can a fœtus be termed inanimate, when it grows, of course is nourished and manifests all the phenomena of life? The supposition of inani-

mate embryos capable of being developed, is, at the present day, an absurdity. From the moment of conception it must be alive, for immediately it begins to be developed; it is separated, as you will hereafter learn, from the ovary, where it was generated, and travels some three or four inches, through a narrow tube or canal, to the uterus, as much disconnected from the mother as the chick in ovo is separated from the parent hen. Its subsequent attachments to the mother, by means of the placenta and uterus, are so indirect (as will be hereafter demonstrated,) that we are justified in asserting that the mother has little more influence upon the child in utero, than the parent bird has upon its offspring in the egg.

If the question, therefore, be returned upon us, when does that mystical union between our corporeal and spiritual nature, between matter and spirit, body and soul, occur? we answer, at the time of conception. It is then only the father can, in any way, exert an influence over his offspring; it is then only the female germ is in direct union with the mother; the connexion afterwards is indirect and imperfect. To suppose that the body only is generated at conception, and that the spirit is subsequently added, is, in the absence of all direct revelation on the subject, philosophically untrue, being at variance with the facts and with reason, as has already been illustrated and enforced.

I have been led into this discussion, gentlemen, rather further than I anticipated, but not further than its importance demands. It is in all aspects interesting and important. The opinions of medical men on these subjects regulate public sentiment, govern the tribunals of justice, and influence even the minds of the mental philosopher, and the scrutinizing theologian. As respects this subject of the vitality of the fœtus in utero, unfortunately, the inconsiderate speculations of physiologists have become the foundation on which legislators have constructed laws, and the moralist promulgated rules, regulating human sentiments and conduct, on the interesting and important subjects of *abortion* or *premature labour*. If the embryo and fœtus be, as the stoics supposed, merely "*portio matris viscerum*;" if it be not possessed of a sentient principle, a living soul, until the

period of actual delivery, then all attempts to procure abortion or premature labour, to destroy the embryo or fœtus in utero, are comparatively venial. Instead of being regarded as a crime of the darkest dye—a crime involving human life—human happiness, and the best interests of society, it is a mere misdemeanour, hardly to be noticed or punishable in the slightest manner. Hence, some of the ancient laws, and even the modern law of Scotland, do not protect the fœtus in utero, on the principle of an independent existence. They merely regarded the attempt to destroy it, as an injury to the mother, to be punished according to the kind and degree of injury thus inflicted.

About the year 692, a very different sentiment was promulgated and supported in the Roman Empire, so that by a council and decree of the emperor, the procuring of an abortion was "*homicide*,"—murder, to be punished with death.

"In France, the Roman law was adopted, and the parliaments frequently condemned midwives to be hanged for procuring the abortion of girls; and physicians, surgeons, and others guilty of this crime, were subjected to the same punishment."* This continued until the period of the revolution, when the punishment of death was transmuted to imprisonment for twenty years; and by the Napoleon code in 1810, the degree of punishment is still further lessened. Founded on the erroneous and still prevalent idea, that the fœtus, prior to quickening, is in a different state than when this event has occurred, the laws of many nations have drawn distinctions which cannot be justified by the physiologist or the physician. The English law, which governs generally in this country, as laid down by the celebrated Blackstone, does not even notice the crime of abortion before quickening, and even after this process, affirms that it is not murder, but a serious misdemeanour. The good sense and correct feelings of the English nation have, however, revised these laws, and by the Ellenborough Act, enacted in 1803, it was ordained that the procuring of an abortion of a female, *not quick* with child, is felony, to be punished by fine,

* Beek, Med. Juris., p. 275, vol. 1.

imprisonment, exposure on the pillory, publicly or privately whipped, or transportation beyond the sea for any term not exceeding fourteen years. The same Act also declares that to procure abortion *after quickening*, is murder, to be punishable with death. This I believe remains the law of England, and, however severe it may appear, the good of society and the interests of morality demand that the crime should be designated by its true title—"murder"—and that a severe punishment be therewith connected.

In our own country there has been but little legislation on this subject. We are governed by the common law of England (of course not by the specific acts of its legislature,) in this respect, and hence criminal abortion is regarded as a misdemeanour, only punishable by fine and imprisonment. It ought, however, to be added, that if the mother perish in consequence of an attempt to destroy the product of conception, the perpetrator of this barbarity is regarded as a murderer, although he had no intention to injure the parent. Judge King, of this city, in a charge delivered to a jury on a trial for murder of the mother, caused by procuring abortion, declares that, "at common law the crime is murder. Every act of procuring abortion," he says, "is murder, whether the person perpetrating such act intended to kill the woman, or merely feloniously to destroy the fruit of her womb." The procuring abortion is "a base and unmanly act:" it is a crime against the natural feelings of man; against the welfare and safety of females; against the peace and prosperity of society; against the divine commandment—"thou shalt not kill." It is *murder*.

It is in vain to evade this conclusion. As far as human investigation has gone, or probably ever will go, in penetrating the mysterious function of generation—as far as the light of reason or the torch of revelation has elucidated the subject—there can be no reasonable doubt, that human existence, corporeally and spiritually, commences, not with the birth of the foetus and the first inspiration, but at conception; when the germs furnished by both parents are quickened into life. Nutrition, growth, the development of organs, the successive display

of organic, animal, intellectual, moral, and spiritual functions, are but the successive manifestations of that mysterious principle of life—the gift of the Creator—which, feeble as it may be when first exerted within the dark, impenetrable recesses of the mother's system, daily and hourly gains strength and energy, continually developing new organs and new functions, until, under its plastic and reviving influences, the invisible product of conception is developed, grows, passes through its embryotic and foetal stages of existence, appears as the breathing and lovely infant; the active, the intelligent boy; the studious and moral youth; the adult man, rejoicing in the plenitude of his corporeal strength and intellectual powers, capable of moral and spiritual enjoyments; and finally, in this world, as the aged man, whose system is preparing for new transformations, which, however humbling they may at first appear to the pride of man, and however apparently destructive to his corporeal and intellectual existence, are but the precursors of that glorious change, when, as revelation teaches, these natural bodies shall become spiritual bodies; when this corruptible, shall put on incorruption; when changes will be effected, infinitely greater and more mysterious than occur at conception and during gestation; and, when it will be found, that the existence commenced in the ovary of a female, mysterious and wonderful as it may be, is but the commencement of a series of changes, each more wonderful and glorious than its predecessor, to which the same identical human being will be subjected, perhaps, for eternity.

These simple truths, almost self-evident, and which might be easily deduced from *a priori* reasoning, have been strangely neglected by medical men, and of course by legislators, moralists, and other influential individuals, who give tone to the feelings of society. We need not wander far for proofs of this assertion. The history of almost every nation is blackened by the hideous, unnatural crime of “infanticide.” You have all read of the horrible sacrifices of infants among barbarous nations, to appease or propitiate their idol gods; you know that Greeks and Romans, with all their boasted wisdom and refinement, habitually exposed their infants to the most terrible deaths;

that this crime is not forgotten in modern times; that among nations, deprived of the light of Christianity, the sacrifices and the wanton destruction of infants still prevail, whether we extend our views to Asia, Africa, or America, or the islands of the sea.

Criminal abortion is almost as prevalent; Hippocrates, the father of medicine, alludes to the potions taken by wicked females, or administered by still more wicked and detestable men, to procure delivery. The females of Rome have their depravity in this respect, recorded on a monument—"perennius œre"—the Satires of Juvenal.

Would, gentlemen, that we could exonerate the moderns from guilt on this subject. It is, however, a mournful fact, which ought to be promulgated, that this crime, this mode of committing murder, is prevalent among the most intelligent, refined, moral, and Christian communities. We blush, while we record the fact, that in this country, in this city, where literature, science, morality, and Christianity are supposed to have so much influence; where all the domestic and social virtues are reported as being in full and delightful exercise; even here, individuals, male and female, exist, who are continually imbruing their hands and consciences in the blood of unborn infants; yea, even medical men are to be found, who, for some trifling pecuniary recompense, will poison the fountains of life, or forcibly induce labour to the certain destruction of the fœtus, and not unfrequently of its parent. So low, gentlemen, is the moral sense of the community on this subject—so ignorant are the greater number of individuals, that even mothers, in many instances, shrink not from the commission of this crime; but will voluntarily destroy their own progeny, in violation of every natural sentiment, and in opposition to the laws of God and man. Perhaps there are few individuals, in extensive practice as obstetricians, who have not had frequent applications made to them by the fathers or mothers of unborn children, (respectable and polite in their general appearance and manners,) to destroy the fruit of illicit pleasure, under the vain hope of preserving their reputation, by this unnatural and guilty sa-

*crifice of their own offspring. Married females, also, from the fear of labour, from indisposition to have the care or the expense, or trouble of children, or some other motive equally trifling and degrading, have solicited, that the embryo should be destroyed, and have often voluntarily swallowed poisonous medicines that abortion may be induced. And when such individuals are informed of the nature of the transaction, there is an expression of real or pretended surprise that any one should deem the act improper, much more guilty.

Addressing you, young gentlemen, as the future physicians of our country, I feel bound to advance one step further, and to present another illustration of the low estimate in which foetal life is held even by the most refined, delicate, and I may add, in some instances the most moral females in this or any other country.

You all know something of the power and endurance of maternal affection. How instinctive, how disinterested, how devoted is the love of a mother to her child? to what labours and anxieties, to what sacrifices and self-denials will it not prompt? how is self lost in contemplating the beloved being, the offspring of her body, which has been for days and months nurtured and pillowed on her breasts? Yet many, very many instances occur to the obstetric practitioner, where these same individuals are perfectly indifferent respecting the safety of the foetus in utero, which, when born, affords so much pleasure, and is the object of so much affection. They seem not to realize that the being within them, is indeed animate; that it is of importance, that its value is inestimable, having reference to this world and the next. Hence, they are in every way neglectful of its interests; they eat and drink; they walk or ride; they indulge every passion, every caprice, utterly regardless of the life of the unseen and unloved embryo. They act with as much indifference, as if the intelligent, immortal existence lodged within their organs, were of no more value than the bread eaten, or the common excretions of the system. Yea, many have acted so thoughtlessly (to use no stronger expression,) so foolishly, as to make extra muscular efforts, by running and

jumping, that they might be delivered of an embryo for which they have no desire, and whose birth and appearance they dread. Even in cases where mothers have suffered from repeated abortions; where *fœtus* after *fœtus* has perished; where often repeated disappointments have at last left the female childless, with impaired health and strength; even in such cases, we can all bear testimony, in case of another pregnancy, to the great difficulty of inducing our wayward patients to forego certain gratifications; to practice some self-denial; and to adopt some efficient treatment for the salvation of their child. Often must all the eloquence and all the authority of the practitioner be employed; often he must, as it were, grasp the conscience of his weak and erring patient; and let her know, in language not to be misunderstood, that she is responsible to her Creator, for the life of the being within her system.

After this exposition, and the details which have been given; and especially in view of the influence which medical science must exert on these questions, it seems hardly necessary to repeat that physicians, medical men, must be regarded as the guardians of the rights of infants. They alone can rectify public opinion; they alone can present the subject in such a manner that legislators can exercise their powers aright in the preparation of suitable laws; that moralists and theologians can be furnished with facts to enforce the truth, on this subject, upon the moral sense of the community, so that not only may the crime of infanticide be abolished, but that criminal abortion be properly reprehended, and that females, in every rank and condition of life, may be sensible of the value of the embryo and *fœtus*, and of the high responsibility which rests on the parents of every unborn infant.

While thus advocating in this place the importance of Obstetric science on the welfare of females and of children, and hence on the best interests of society; while presenting myself as an advocate as well as one of the physical guardians of the rights of infants, it is with no ordinary satisfaction, that I can survey such an assemblage of intelligent and educated young men as are here collected, who have devoted themselves to

the pursuit of a science so exalted—so noble as that of medicine; who, with an ardent enthusiasm, have determined to wage a war of extermination against any and every opinion and practice, which in any degree infringes on the rights of females and their offspring.

In this glorious work I bid you prosper. Your rewards may not be riches and honour, but they will be more valuable and enduring, arising from the smiles of an approving conscience, and the blessing of that Being who has pronounced the severest curse on the crime of murder.

